THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. IV. October 7, 1938 Tishri 12, 5699 No. 11

Editorials:

ROSH HA-SHANAH
THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Voice of the Shofar

By I. D. MINZBERG

Amitz Koah

By EUGENE KOHN

A Hymn for the Day of Atonement

Translated from the Hebrew of Solomon Ibn Gabriol

By MOSES HADAS

Proceedings of the Reconstructionist Summer Institute

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EDITORIALS

Rosh Ha-Shanah

ON THE threshold of the new year, Jewish religious tradition bids us pause and consider our lot. This year, we cannot do this without a heaviness of heart. Since last Rosh Ha-Shanah, the world has sunk deeper into the morass of war, hatred, bigotry. Poverty is unrelieved; inequality unabated. Has Jewish religion a word, a message for us? If it has, let that word be spoken; if not, thousands of weary-souled Jews will ask it forever to hold its peace.

The challenge is a bold one. Has our tradition something to say which is acceptable to the intellectually honest, and yet heartening to the depressed? We believe so. In general, three attitudes toward the world and our future may be enumerated. There are those who are pessimistic because of the prevailig conditions. They reiterate the age-old cry: the world is chaos, not cosmos. There is no order, only disorder; discord, not harmony. On the *yom ha-din,* they say, *"Let din, v'let dayyan",* there is no Law, there is no judge. They see in the madness of the nations a corroboration of their enduring skepticism.

We cannot accept this version of life, any more than our Rabbis could accept as true the wailings of the *epikoros.* The sentiment precipitates the death which it means to decry. It is not wisdom; it does not make for life; and, we take it, we desire life.

Secondly, there are those who are *optimistic despite* prevailing conditions. They refuse to despair. Somehow, sometime, salvation will come. They affirm a faith, admittedly blind. They invoke the faith of their ancestors who believed with a perfect heart that the Messiah would come, and although he tarried, nevertheless they would await his coming daily. Why, they ask, can we not share the same faith, and retain hope in the face of universal catastrophe? The answer is quite plain: their faith, the faith of the traditional Jew, was not blind—not for them. It was a faith based upon what they believed to be concrete evidence. Had not God revealed Himself to the patriarchs, to the Prophets and the Sages? Had He not revealed a Law which miraculously endowed its devotee with eternal life? What mattered the slings and arrows of pagan persecution? Bliss hereafter awaited all who followed the Law. That faith is shared by few today. Sheer optimism, flying in the face of world catasclysm, must be blind. Are all who preach such faith absolutely convinced themselves?

The third kind of attitude is one characterized by *hope because of prevailing conditions.* Yes, *because* of them. Because there is anarchy and violence, pil-

lage and burning, poverty and rebellion. If these evils had not made their appearance ,the cynics of the world would have good reason to cackle in glee. They would be right when they say that there is no Law and no Judge. But they are wrong; there is cosmos, not chaos. There is a rational superstructure to our life which relentlessly brings effect upon the heels of cause. Evil does not go unpunished. The moral law will not be violated with impunity.

A peace built upon vengeance and hate cannot endure; it breeds Hitlers and their ugly entourage. An economic order, predatory and heartless, breeds violence and unrest. The Prophets understood this, and that is why they seem to be Prophets of doom; in reality, they were the Prophets of hope. The false prophets told their kings that they could "get away with it," with injustice and oppression; the true Prophets said they could not. The Prophets of truth have never been refuted. Today, in the words of Isaiah, "God's hand is raised and they see it not."

The basis of our hope lies in the moral uniformity of nature. It assures us that there is a God whose Law is truth. It reminds us that we may expect paradise on earth once we are determined to obey that Law.

The Reconstructionist Summer Institute

IN our last issue before we suspended publication for the summer months, we invited our readers to attend our first Reconstructionist Institute. Although similar conferences, preliminary to the establishment of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST made us hopeful that our Institute would be fruitful of good results, it was not without some trepidation that we issued our call. For to these previous conferences invitations had been extended to a select list of individuals; to this Institute we invited all who were interested. We had, therefore, no way of knowing with what response we should meet.

Our hopes were realized, our fears proved groundless. We are confident that as we publish in future issues the papers which were read at the Institute, our readers will agree that they constitute valuable contributions to the solution of some of our most pressing problems, particularly to the vexed problem of Jewish community organization.

But the signifiance of the Institute is not exhausted by the value of the papers that were there presented. It is something of an achievement merely to bring together about a hundred Jewish men and women, including rabbis of the various schools, educators, social workers, center workers, journalists and laymen, to discuss the spiritual problems of Jewish life. We doubt whether any other Jewish agency could have brought togther such an assemblage. Not that every one present was a convinced Reconstructionist. Our invitation was extended to all Jews who were interested and we deem it a compliment to the importance of our movement that even those who do not see eye to eye with us nevertheless find it worthwhile to attend our Institute. We are so sure of the soundness of the Reconstructionist platform that we have no hesitation about giving every honest opinion a hearing. And we welcome whatever light can be cast on the problems that interest us whether it comes from a source that is in total agreement with us or not. In consequence, the discussions at the Cejwin Camp were characterized at once by candor and tolerance and achieved a unity of spirit that transcended all differences of opinion.

Our Institute was not a convention. No motions were made and no resolutions adopted. Nevertheless the trend of the discussion frequently led to a consensus of opinion which was as decisive on questions of policy as any vote could have been, but which had the additional advantage of involving no overruled and disgruntled minority. Among such decisions were the determination that the movement should stimulate the preparation of supplementary prayer material

rather than involve itself in the publication of a new prayer book, and that it make no effort at codifying minima of religious observance for the modern Jew, though it should encourage discussion looking to an evaluation of Jewish traditional observances in the light of modern experience and modern needs.

But by far the most important decision which emerged from the proceedings of the Institute was the clear mandate that it gave to extend the scope of Reconstructionist effort beyond the mere publication of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. It was felt that our paper should continue its policy of addressing itself as a magazine of opinion to the more intellectual and better informed element in American Jewry, but that there was need for our spreading our ideas in wider circles by the publication of pamphlets, syllabi, text-books and devotional literature. The question of how this could be accomplished without creating another partisan institution with vested interests was answered by the decision to build up a circle of Friends of the Reconstructionist who would make voluntary contributions to the support of the movement and who would seek to spread its literature and its ideas in their respective communities. Many of those present not only pledged their own contributions as Friends of the Reconstructionist but also undertook to enroll others in their communities. We hope that our readers who were not present will respond as generously, when called upon.

But quite apart from the practical achievements of the Reconstructionist Summer Institute, we feel that those who attended it will agree that it was a valuable spiritual experience. Religious movements must express themselves in terms of personality. Their spirit finds its most perfect embodiment not in literature but in men and women. Those that have been profoundly moved by the need of raising the ethical, cultural and spiritual level of Jewish life in the modern world must welcome every opportunity to meet each other face to face. To the editors of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, it was most stimulating to meet so many of its readers and contributors and to derive encouragement, guidance and a genial feeling of fellowship from the contact.

The Voice of The Shofar

By I. D. MINZBERG

T'KIAH

WHAT is the thrill, O son of man, that courses through your body as you hear my voice calling? What makes your blood so to tingle in your veins and your heart to beat so fast? Your eyes are filling with tears at the sound of my voice as at the voice of a friend well-beloved, long known and long unheard of. What is the voice saying to you, O lonely child of Israel?

You hear no words, you only hear a sound. And yet the sound speaks so eloquently of things ineffable, of glories that are past, of ecstacies of the soul in glamorous days of old. Carried by my voice, you travel along oceans of time. Visions arise before your eyes, conjured up from ancient days:

Behold Abraham, your father, and father Isaac, returning together from Mount Moriah, having set to all eternity an example of trust in God and demonstrated that God keeps faith with His faithful ones;

See the seed of the patriarchs, the hosts of Israel, standing in awe before the Mountain of God, listening to the call of a mighty shofar, accepting the burden of a kingdom of priests;

Watch the caravans of myriads of men set in motion with silver trumpets, tramping across the fearful desert, marching forward to the promised land.

You hear no words, you only hear a sound. But the sound fills your heart with wonder, and you listen to the echo of the days of yore: to legends imbibed with your mother's milk, to tales recalled from cradle days.

Plain and simple is my sound. Yet its tone is ever pregnant with the music of the seraphim on Mount Sinai; with the choral harmonies of youthful Levites singing their halleluyahs around the altar of the Holy Temple.

Penetrating and intimate, it brings to your ears greetings from ancestors who lived a holy life and died a heroic death. Muted and solemn, the message comes to you in the stillness of the synagogue; you hold your breath and listen to its sound, soothing as a caress, tender as a kiss. . . .

Hearken to my voice, hearken! Weep softly and join hands with your brethren congregated around you: brethren in heritage, sharing together the bitter-sweets of nostalgic legacies. . . .

* * * * *

SH'VARIM

What is that cloud that has now lowered over your brow, O afflicted mortal? You have heard me heralding the new year, the end of the summer and the beginning of a new winter. But the thought of winter fills you with sorrow and dismay. There is a sad catch in your throat, and your lips move so piteously. Is it that you hear the approach of your own winter, the decline of your life, so short and so crowded with disappointments and disillusionments? Are you sorry for yourself, your blasted hopes, your thwarted ambitions; for the joys you have missed and the agonies you have endured?

The memory of your childhood and early youth arises before your misty eyes: the memory of your age of innocence, your golden age. Your future then appeared to you in a halo of irridescent glory, intoxicating you with its sheer beauty and causing your heart to overflow with love for all that had a living breath in their nostrils. And you in turn were loved by man and beast alike. You dreamed dreams, you made plans; you were basking in the sun of rosy hopes, fascinated by a nosegay of colorful fancies.

Ah, the sweet fruit of your fancy has again and again turned into wormwood in your mouth. The rainbow you chased since your childhood always removed beyond your reach. The glamor of adventure in unknown lands vanished when you found them to be barren soil. Never have you reached your land of promise, never found your haven of rest. Lofty peaks lured you upwards, spurred you on to mighty efforts; bravely did you scale the rugged mountains, tearing your flesh on flinty rocks; only to meet with thickets of thorns when at last you reached the top.

Truly, life has dealt harshly with you, my poor grown-up child. So many of your dreams have turned out to be a snare and a delusion that you fear to trust in your neighbors and even your faith in yourself fails you. Weary of flesh and heavy of spirit, you cry out in your despair; Verily this life is only a vale of tears. . . .

Yet I remember, my son, the day when my clarion call ushering in the New Year set your heart aflame and your hopes ablaze, lighting up one cumulus after another as they multiplied on the horizon of your blue skies. Life then seemed an interminable feast, a table set for a billion guests with precious favors at every seat. Your heart exulted with the keen anticipation of rare delights stored in all of your tomorrows. The dance of life was mighty and joyous, and you were drunk

with its music, its rhythm always keeping time with the beating of your heart. You were young then, my boy, and wedding bells were ringing in your ears. . . .

Now, alas! my sound lacks its former merry timbre. As the years are tolled off by me one after another my voice loses more and more of its former exhiliration. It is heartbreaking, indeed, but it is true: the nuptial undertones of my voice are evermore drowned in knells of macabre forebodings. . . . What a pity it all is, what a pity!

Weep, my son, weep; shed your tears of sorrow. For great is your pain and deep is your wound; tears alone will ease your heart. But remember, my child, you are not alone in your plight. Life has dealt even so with all of your contemporaries, as mature awakening ever follows youthful dreams.

Hearken then to my sound, O mortal man, hearken to the wailing of breaking hearts. Hear the sobbing of vanishing dreams, listen to the sighing of shattering hopes. For my voice is the voice of all men, and I speak only what is in their hearts.

* * * * *

T'RUAH

Hearken now to my voice, O my son, listen to the tidings of future life. Cease your crying, stop your weeping, hold your peace like a man. Enough indulging in pity of self! Open your ears and listen to the song of rising youth.

Behold the faces of the swains and maidens around you. See the clear bright eyes reflecting the splendor of all creation. Look at the smooth brows sheltering young thoughts, harboring pristine dreams.

Hearken to the tumult of noble passions stirring the blood of valiant youth, rushing to the core of eager hearts, straining the fiber of tender breasts. Feast your eyes, O weary man, on the throng of new guests at the threshold of life, thrilling with wonder at its mystery and promise. Defeat and failure they know not yet. Nor have their wings been clipped with the scissors of doubt. Merrily do they watch the rolling of the years, welcoming my voice as the harbinger of good tidings, the herald of new life.

Watch, O world-weary wayfarer, watch the youngsters around you setting out to seek adventures. Look! Your former self, back at the loom, weaves again the thread of your life. The shuttle dances with fresh vigor, guided by the hand of a sturdy craftsman with eyes steady on the fabric of dreams.

What if your hopes and ambitions have so far come to naught? What if your own short life will not see your ideals take form and concretion? What of that, O impatient man? Is not your life merely a page out of an old music book? The tune was set long ago, the performance began with the birth of man. Fascinating music it is indeed: the theme recurs again and again, but never sounds twice the same. Each of your fathers through the centuries played his part as best he could; then he cleared the way for his successor. You in turn have made an appearance, have had your day at the ancient harp. Now you are called from the wings: it is time for you to leave the stage. Take your leave then as did your fathers; cede your place to new musicians. Watch them play the magic strings, interpret anew the melody of dreams. They shall sing again your song of life, repeat again the old refrain transmitted to you by ancient forebears and by you bequeathed to future seedlings by whom indeed you in turn will be recalled as 'The Ancestor.'

Cheer up then, my child. Hearken to the note of triumph in my voice announcing the victories of future days. Your sons and daughters shall yet fulfill your destiny, shall complete the mission of your waning life.

Take heart, my son. For the symphony of life is exceeding long and not to be played in one man's lifetime. You and your fathers have set the motif: your

offspring will unfold its many variations. You have tuned the harp; your children will rejoice in its colorful vibrations.

Hearken therefore to my voice, O father of blessed sons! Dry your tears and weep no more. Strengthen the hands of rising youth, the future bearers of sacred torches. Hearken to my voice, hearken!

* * * * *

T'KIAH G'DOLAH

Listen to the trumpet call of my voice, O man, son of Adam, listen to the rumbling of the end of days. Watch the hosts, the joyous hosts, blithely ascending the Mount of Zion. Hear the song, the song of triumph, sung in unison with mighty voices. Listen to the hymns, the hymns of praise, chanted in devotion by man redeemed. Listen, O man, listen to the virile accents of God's anointed proclaiming peace to all the world, announcing felicity to all mankind.

The day has come, the day has come! The day of bliss, the day of glory, the day of Jehovah! Listen to the cooing of the dove, nestling in the wings of the mighty eagle. Listen to the bleating of the tender lamb carried on the back of the wolf. Look! Yonder is the lion munching straw, fed by the hand of a ruddy babe; and further on you see the leopard tending with care a young lost kid. Hoofed, winged, creeping creatures—the kinship of living unites them all. They breathe the air in rapt devotion. It burns within them, a sacred flame, holy incense in a tabernacle of peace.

Hark! A sound of thunder from the arsenal! A multitude of people batters at the doors. A sudden crash deafens the ears; the crash of cannon smashed asunder, shattered into a myriad fragments, crushed and ground by mighty arms plying fiercely heavy axes. Look! Look! The crowd scatters in sudden haste. Down come the walls of stone. The house of death is levelled to the ground. Shouts of joy rise to the heavens, the air is filled with the sound of trumpets. The tidings travel in all directions, the call is heard over land and water, is echoed again by a billion voices: the day has come, the day has come!

To the smithy, to the smithy, O man! Follow the clamor of erstwhile soldiers. Listen to the clang of the blacksmith's hammer. Look at the sparks flashing from the anvil. Hear the roar of mighty bellows. Watch the smith! O watch him beat swords into plowshares, fashion spears into sturdy pruning hooks. . . .

Verily the hour of fulfilment has struck the day of the Lord has come.

Hail the day, and hail man, at last grown up to his full stature! Hail the day, the glorious day, when man makes pets of tigers, and tigers and sheep graze together. Hail the day, the promised day, the day of peace everlasting, the day of happiness without end.

Hearken to my voice, O my son, and live for that day when hatred shall be no more, and envy shall have no meaning, when love and mercy and wisdom shall fill the earth, even as the waters that cover the ocean beds.

Open your ears and listen to me, for, verily, happy is the people that understand the sound of my trumpet. Yea hearken to my voice and listen to my speech. Bend your knee, bow your head, and pay homage to the throne of glory.

Hearken, O man, hearken! Hearken to the sound of the GREAT SHOFAR!

Amitz Koah*

by Eugene Kohn

O Thou whose glory the heavens proclaim,
Who rulest the cosmos with a law
That stars and planets and all their moons obey,
Thou didst elect this small planet of earth,
This spinning mote of star-dust in the vast void of space,
To be the abode of life.
For countless ages, the sun flooded it with light,
Yet no eye beheld the sun's brilliance;
The winds whispered and roared about it,
But no ear attended
To their soft murmurs or their thunder tones.

Then Thy creative word went forth.

Small, microscopic creatures were born in the shallow waters and marshes.
Their substance was of the same elements as earth and sea and air,
But Thy creative word endowed them with powers new.
Theirs was the power to feed and to sustain their being,
To reproduce their kind and multiply.
Some were further gifted
With the beginning of the power of sense,
To perceive, explore and apprehend their world.
Thus dawned that consciousness which was a presage
Of the emergence of the mind of man.
So by Thy word, the earth became alive.
A flood of life burst forth
And found itself innumerable channels
In an endless variety of living species.

"How manifold are Thy works, O Lord!
All of them hast Thou created with wisdom;
The whole earth is full of Thine achievements.
Yonder sea, vast and wide—
In it are moving beings without number,
Living things both small and great.
All creatures look to Thee
To give them their food in its season.
Thou sendest forth Thy spirit;
They are created, and Thou renewest the face of the earth.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, Halleluyah!"

To each living creature Thy wisdom imparted secrets of life.
Thou taughtest the fish to live and move and multiply
In the cool waters of river, lake and ocean.

*As the title implies, this is offered as a substitute for the *piyut, amitz koah,* which intrduces the description, in the Musaf Service of the Day of Atonement, of the sacrificial ritual in the Temple at Jerusalem. Like that poem, it seeks to put that ritual in a cosmic setting, but it does so in a way that takes cognizance of changes in our views of the cosmos and of the origin of the human race, Israel and the priesthood.

Thou didst instruct the birds in the secret lore
Of aerial navigation.
Without sextant or compass,
They hold their course in the uncharted heavens
Changing their homes with changes of the seasons.
Thou taughtest the beasts of prey to use
Their mighty and terrible weapons of claw and fang.
Others learned of Thy wisdom
To shield their life behind defensive armor
Of scales or leathery hide.
Still others were trained by Thee
In the power of rapid, pursuit-defying flight.
And all these creatures, in the exercise of their powers,
Found joy and the zest of life,
For Thou didst create them all
In love.

But upon one species, more than upon all others,
Thou wast lavish with Thy gifts;
Upon one species whom Thy creative word called into being among the last
Of species still extant:
The species, Man.
Thou gavest him not the fangs and claws of the lion and tiger;
Thou gavest him not the thick hide of the elephant
Or the scaly armor of the alligator;
Thou gavest him not the speed of deer or horse;
But Thou gavest him powers greater than all these:
A mind alert, a heart alive to love,
A soul aspiring to know and to fulfil
His destiny as governed by Thy wisdom.
Alone among Thy creatures he was given
The art to fashion tools to meet his needs.
To him alone was given the power of speech,
The mystery by which each separate soul,
Unique and singular, yet shares his life
With others in one mystic interchange
Of personalities,
Until the separateness of "self" and "other"
Is bridged by sympathy and understanding,
Until each human being knows his destiny
To be bound up with that of all his fellows,
In one humanity.
Wherefore, although the individual man,
Unaided and alone,
Is weak and helpless beyond all else that lives,
Thy divine power of love has instructed him
To live a social life and to create
Structures of civilization, thus acquiring
New resources of power that have made him
Master of all that lives upon this earth.

"Yea, Thou hast made him little less than a god,
Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor,
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy hand,
Thou hast set all things under his feet;
All sheep and cattle; yea, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air and the fishes of the sea,
Whatever passeth through the paths of the deep."

Would that men knew and ever kept in mind
The secret of Man's success:
That man's supremacy over the beast has been achieved
Not by might and not by power,
But by the spirit of reason and of love,
Making it possible to seek a common good
By binding men in bands of fellowship
And mutual loyalty invincible.
But not at once could Man avail himself of the divine wisdom
That his deepest insights revealed to him in flashes of inspiration.
Long and painful have been the efforts of Man
To raise himself above the level of the beast.
Again and again did he lose touch
With the divine spirit by which he rose to power.
Then he would seek in his folly
To assert himself after the manner of his animal ancestry,
To emulate the unenlightened instincts
Of ravenous beasts of prey.
To the frustration of his higher destiny,
He abused his gift of contrivance and invention,
Forging himself artificial claws and fangs,
Destructive weapons of war to rend and kill.
How long, O Lord, how long
Will the curse of Cain haunt
The gifted but unhappy race of Man?
How long, O, Lord, how long
Shall Abel's blood, the blood of slaughtered innocents
In all the wretched wars that men have waged,
Plead all unheeded that all men are brothers
And every man the keeper of his brother?

We cannot know how long, but this we know:
That, spite of all man's folly and wickedness,
Thou hast set in the inmost sanctuary of his being
Thy law of righteousness, love and peace.
The flame that burns on the altar of that sanctuary
May flicker but can never be quenched.
For that flame is Thine own spirit, O Eternal One,
Burning within us.

Thou didst inspire our people, the house of Israel,
To recognize that flame and minister to it,
As a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

To know Thee, love Thee and obey Thy law—
This was the message of their history
As they rehearsed it through the generations.
Therefore they loved to trace their ancestry
To him of whom it is told that he foresook
His land, his kindred and his father's house
To found a nation pledged to do Thy will.

> *"And God said unto Abraham: get thee out of thy land, they birthplace and thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee, and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thee great. So be thou a blessing."*

To keep them minded of their covenant
With all the promised blessing that it held,
The seed of Abraham ordained a priesthood,
Of the tribe of Levi to minister in the Temple,
That ritual acts of reverential worship
Might waken in the hearts of men the yearning
To dwell forever in God's courts, to hold
Perpetual communion with the Holy One,
To be forever illumined by His light,
To be forever solaced by His love,
To be forever strengthened by His power,
Secure against temptation and frustration.

> *"Thy priests are robed in rigtheousness*
> *And Thy saints sing for joy.*
> *The law of truth is in their mouth*
> *And wrong is not found in their lips.*
> *In peace and righteousness, they walk with God,*
> *And many do they turn away from evil.*
> *For the lips of the priest guard knowldege,*
> *And men shall seek guidance from his mouth,*
> *For he is a messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*

The Temple that was raised to God in Jerusalem was the glory and joy of Israel. But it was a temple built by human hands and ministered to by a human priesthood. "And what man is there so righteous upon earth that he doeth good and sinneth never." The noblest institutions that man can raise are easily tainted and diverted from their holy uses by his vice and folly. What then if the Temple, the source of Israel's purity and holiness, be itself contaminated and profaned? What can then save the people from sinking deeper and deeper into sin and error? Only Thy love, O Lord, as manifest in the power of repentance and spiritual renewal.

Faith in this power of repentance and knowledge of the need of atonement led to the ordinance of the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary of Israel's worship was to be purified by ritual acts expressive of the yearning for a return to the wholehearted service of the Most High, for the reconsecration of priest, congregation and Temple to that service.

"The priest shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. And this shall be an everlasting statute to you to make atonement for the children of Israel because of all their sin once in the year.

Though the Temple in Jerusalem is no more, and the ancient ritual of sacrifice no longer adequately expresses our yearning for restoration to the grace of God, yet, on this day, our minds revert to the ancient shrine of our people, the symbol of its aspiration for communion with Thee. Again we pass in review the ancient rites whereby the priests sought to atone for sin and to renew the power of holiness and purity that radiated from the Temple to illuminate every nook and cranny of Jewish life. We thus awaken in our own hearts the resolve to purify the shrines of our own worship, to cleanse the synagogue, the school, the home, all the sacred institutions that manifest God's presence in our midst, and to atone for all the sins and vices wherewith we have profaned them. Oh! may we make them habitable for Thy presence, that we may live in Thee, know Thee, love Thee, feel Thy love upon us, face our cares and tribulations, bear our burdens, discharge our responsibilities, sustained by Thee and loyal to Thy will.

A Hymn of Solomon Ibn Gabirol for Atonement Day

Translated from the Hebrew of Solomon Ibn Gabirol by Moses Hadas

O Thou that abidest forever in sanctity.
Thy name Thy faithful votaries' mystery
Enthroned in Thy realm through all eternity:
Eternally their lips Thy praise profess
Whose spirit is charged with Thine impress.

Thou, O God art life's intensity,
Thine the glory, the might, the majesty;
The grace, the beauty, the tuneful harmony:
Who can front Thee, who Thy power face,
Thy counsels deep, Thy marvels wide as space?

Alone didst Thou order Thine ancient sway,
With none to second thee, none to gainsay.
Of Thy goodness alone universe didst array,
Moulding a world, measuring with Thy span
Its heavens, balancing earth by Thy plan.

Man, creation's crown, Thou madest Thy delight;
His seed, Thy chosen heritage, Thou gavest might,
Thy burden submissive to endure, didst requite
Thy chosen vessel, Thy beloved portion
With habit of fortitude and devotion.

A day of forgiveness for Thy portion and its seed,
A solemn sacred day this day hast Thou decreed.

To their multitude from yester-eve assembled give Thou heed;
To Thee their longing hearts now turn:
Treasure precious tears that for Thee yearn.

Like beggar-woman at thy door, suppliant, forlorn,
Israel hungers and thirsts, her spirit travail-torn.
Shelter grant and solace spread for sighs of anguish born.
Make her not to stumble on in futility and despair,
Take as ransom for Thy wrath her humility, her prayer.

She has no sacrifice, O God, no victim to atone
For transgressions; her body's flesh, her blood alone
She offers. Instead of blood sprinkled on stone
She sprinkles tears. Purify her, grant her grace;
With Thy healing dew her sorrows efface.

Mend her breach, restore her ancient state,
Her iniquity wash away as by a flood in spate.
Keep Thou this vine; for Thine own vineyard dictate:
"Burgeon well, My vineyard, blossom forth, distil
A vintage sweet the world to fill."

Proceedings of the Reconstructionist Summer Institute

THE Reconstructionist Summer Institute at the Cejwin Camps, Port Jervis, N. Y., opened on Friday evening, September 2, with Sabbath evening services. A revision of the traditional text was used, designed to bring the service into conformity with Reconstructionist principles. The service included supplementary prayers written to express religious aspirations arising from modern experience, and hence not expressed in the traditional liturgy. The text was prepared by Rabbi Eugene Kohn, who officiated at these services together with Cantor Moshe Nathanson.

Friday evening, after dinner, was devoted to an informal session, the program of which was the reading of a letter from Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan,* the founder of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST (now in Jerusalem temporarily occupying the chair of Philosophy of Education in the Hebrew University), and a talk on the present situation in Palestine by Dr. Samuel Dinin, who had just returned from a visit to Palestine. Dr. Kaplan expressed his regret at not being able to participate in the Institute proceedings. He referred to previous conferences of a similar character, called by him, which led to the initiation of the Reconstructionist Movement. He was gratified to see that the movement had developed the initiative to convene the present Institute, from which he anticipated happy results. His letter rebuked those who, while expressing interest in the ideas of Reconstructionism, did not identify themselves with the movement. He urged, as the primary task befor the movement, "the creation of Jewish values . . . great thoughts, great music, great pictures, great architecture." This, he felt, transcended in importance any purely organizational problems. He commended two concrete problems to the attention of the Institute—the establishment of some type of labor synagogue,

* Dr. Kaplan's letter will be published in a future issue.

"to come to grips at first hand with the problems that mark the lives of the Jewish workers," and the achievement of "some *modus vivendi* between the Conservative synagogues, which tend to become synagogue centers, and the community centers, which are usually supported by the local Federation." Though deprecating organizational effort "of the extravert type," Dr. Kaplan commended "organization of the introvert type, i.e., to set up the necessary machinery to bring about the objectives stated."

Dr. Dinin in discussing the Palestine situation, dwelt on the danger at the present time of the breakdown of *havlagah,* the self-restraint which until recently characterized the behavior of the Jewish population in the face of Arab uprising. The danger comes not merely from the Revisionists but from all elements of the population, in view of the nervous strain to which they are subjected in having to work by day and keep vigil by night. They feel that they are no longer confronted with a situation of riot, but with one of warfare, organized and financed by foreign powers, and that they can only cope with the situation if they are permitted to use the same weapons and tactics that are used against them. For this reason the majority of the *yishuv* tends to favor partition, however small may be the portion assigned to the Jews, in order that they shall be free to take such measures of defense as they deem necessary. The prospects of establishing peace with the Arabs, on any basis whatsoever, are contingent on the establishment of peace among the great powers of the world. In the meanwhile the Yishuv carries on with admirable courage and fortitude, and is much less hysterical about the Jewish situation than is diaspora Jewry.

II

On Sabbath morning religious services were again conducted by Cantor Nathanson. A special feature was a sermon by Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser on the subject, "Religion and the Jewish Liberal."* Rabbi Bokser, in his address, showed the inadequacy of all those liberal philosophies which take a negative attitude to religion. The need for religion, he contended, arises from the necessity of an affirmation of the reality of the moral law, without which human life is futile and worthless. This reality is not susceptible of proof, but its assumption is justified by reason of its being indispensable to human self-fulfillment. Once this need is recognized, it carries with it a recognition of the value of those religious rites by which men keep this reality steadfastly in view. Also, the intellectual effort at interpreting the universe and man's experience in it in terms consistent with the religious outlook, which is the objective of theology, becomes important in the light of man's need for affirming the reality of a God whose will is identical with the moral law.

The program for Saturday afternoon was an informal discussion of the services and the sermon. Since no stenographic notes could be taken on account of the Sabbath, a detailed report of the discussion is impossible, but its general drift may be indicated. The discussion was presided over by Mr. Israel Chipkin, who called upon Rabbi Kohn to explain the principles that guided him in the preparation of his text for the Friday night services. Rabbi Kohn stated that, while the text followed the traditional liturgy in the main, it omitted all verses that represented a conception of deity too crude to evoke a reverent sentiment on the part of the worshipers, such as passages, for example, which seem to imply the existence of other deities, or associate God with a spirit of vindictiveness. Slight verbal emendations were made in the traditional text where the latter expressed doctrines no longer generally accepted, such as the belief in a personal Messiah and in the resurrection of the dead. Finally the services sought to express, in supplementary prayers, religious

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* Rabbi Bokser's sermon will be published in a subsequent issue.

motifs that represent aspirations arising from modern experience. In particular, it stressed the social significance of the Sabbath, as motivated by the desire for an equitable distribution of both labor and leisure among all men.

The discussion was participated in by Rabbi Max Arzt, Dr. Bernard Heller, Mr. Sigmund Thau, Mr. Sol Friedland, Dr. Jacob Golub, Rabbi Ira Eisenstein and others. In general, there was agreement on the need for vitalizing the services by new prayers expressive of modern religious ideas and aspirations and on the legitimacy of omitting prayers that no longer evoke religious sentiment or satisfy the modern conscience, but doubt was expressed as to the propriety and the value of making verbal emendations in traditional rubrics. It was pointed out that such changes are emotionally disturbing to those who love the traditional prayers, while those who have become more alienated from the tradition of the synagogue hardly notice such changes and, if they notice them, regard them as trifling; that it is usually possible to reinterpret the old prayers to conform to modern ideas and that the new versions substituted are also susceptible of interpretations not intended by their authors; and that it is unfair to the authors of prayers to insert in their prayers the words of others. The discussion had important bearings on a question of policy before the Reconstructionist movement, viz: whether it should endeavor to publish a series of prayer books. The general consensus, by which the Editorial Board will be guided, seems to be that, while the writing and publishing of supplementary prayers and prayer anthologies should be encouraged, the movement should not attempt to issue new prayer books.

There followed a discussion of Rabbi Bokser's sermon, in which Rabbi Michael Alper, Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, Dr. Jacob Golub and Rabbi Bernard Heller participated.

Rabbi Alper believed that the sermon should have emphasized not the importance of religion as such, but the urgency of the return on the part of the Jewish liberal to Jewish community life in its broader social aspects. Dr. Golub felt that the sermon had dealt with universal religion entirely and had not treated sufficiently the Jewish differentia in the religious process. Rabbi Heller said that the sermon had been too sweeping in its characterization of orthodoxy as involving a sharp dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural. He called attention to the dynamic character of Jewish tradition, in which many varied views were simultaneously expressed. Rabbi Eisenstein argued that the sermon had by its very conception limited itself to the problem of universal religion and could not, therefore, be attacked for not having dealt with matters with which it had not set out to deal.

Dr. Bokser accepted Rabbi Eisenstein's observations and, in reply to Rabbi Heller, drew a distinction between orthodoxy and tradition. Tradition he recognized as a dynamic process, but orthodoxy, he said, was an effort to interpret Judaism in terms of more or less fixed religious postulates, and these included the dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural.

(To be concluded)